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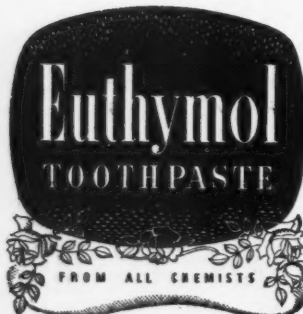
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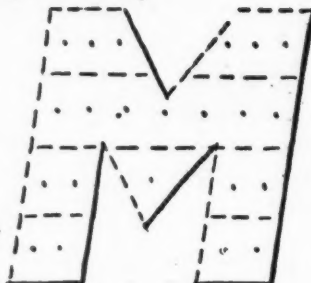
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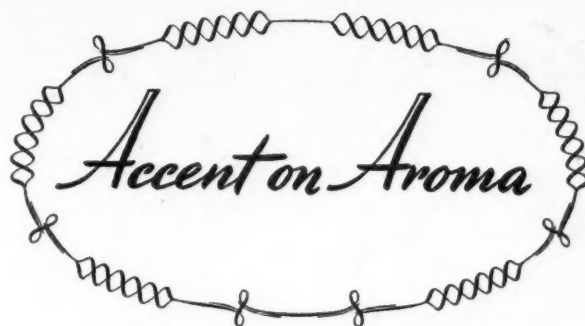


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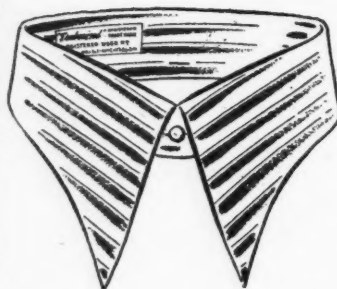
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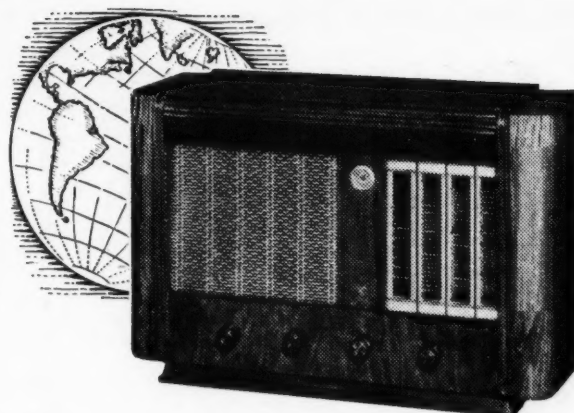
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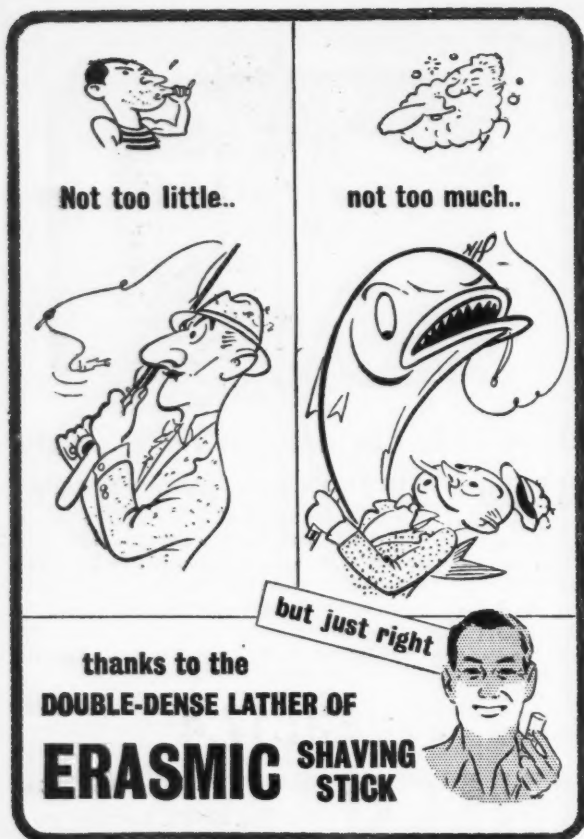


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There is no special time for accidents, and well your doctor knows it. If he is not out, of course he will come. But what a good thing you had an antiseptic you could use safely without hesitation! One that was highly effective yet gentle on tender tissues. What a blessing you had that bottle of 'DETTOL' in the house!

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Stern lanterns, lit by a great many candles, were useful for keeping station and were a means of computing direction and speed of other vessels. The Great Lantern carried by the "Sovereign of the Seas" (1637), "would hold ten persons to stand upright without shouldering or pressing one another."

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PUNCH

Or

The London Charivari



Vol. CCXIV No. 5610

June 23 1948

Charivaria

SHIPS of the Royal Navy are to be painted pale green in future. This will enable National Service recruits to go to sea without impairing the camouflage effect.

A grocer complains of the poor quality wooden boxes supplied with goods nowadays. Board of Trade officials are said to be investigating the theory that someone is making the things from utility furniture.



Set Very Dry

"Will exchange Whiskey, Gin for old English barometer, functioning accurately."

Advt. in "Kensington News."

A young Army recruit has written home to say that his first big thrill was when the sergeant-major suggested that he needed a shave.

A correspondent says that the first caller at his new house was the vicar. It is nice to hear this. Considering the present shortage of new houses it might well have been a burglar.

"At the top of the hill, a passenger told the driver to change down and when he engaged the clutch afterwards something was heard to snap."—*Daily Telegraph.*

Back-seat drivers must expect this sometimes.

A restaurant patron protested loudly after damaging his teeth on gunshot in a portion of rabbit recently. Other diners began surreptitiously looking their whalemeat over for harpoons.



"All my best gags have been pinched," declares a well-known radio comedian. He does not say from whom.

"Good half-bred mare with chestnut mare foal, 2 months old by Sandyman for sale; would make good-class punter."

Advt. in Irish paper.

How much can she afford to lose?

The Government cannot complain if the public refuses to eat snoek—after all, they had no mandate for it.

It is pointed out that listeners who obey B.B.C. requests to reduce the volume of their radios save electric current. Sets could be turned down still lower if performers would co-operate by increasing the volume at the microphone end.



Paper is used in radio sound effects to imitate storms and thunder. The sound of real thunder, on the other hand, indicates that paper is being taken out of envelopes.

"For more than 60 years the Association has sought to make the people and governments of this country 'road-minded.' It has mailed."—*Evening paper.*

Perhaps it would have been quicker to telephone.

A big-game hunter and four assistants are setting out on an expedition to Africa next month to search for a new member of the gnu family. There is a suggestion that a syndicate of crossword compilers may be behind it.



There's a Lot to be Said for It.

STRONG protests are to be made to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries as a result of their advertisements in the press recommending the public to take a potato-farming holiday in October or November.

"It is all very well to point out how fine the weather is in November," said a member of the Cornish Brussels Sprouts Development Committee, when shown a copy of the advertisement. "We don't deny that a week or two spent picking up potatoes in Norfolk and tipping them into strong sacks makes a healthful and invigorating break for the city-dweller. But there are fine days in December, too, and there is a fascination about stripping sprouts that your potato-lifter can never hope to share. All we ask is fair play. The Ministry should awaken the country to the vital importance of an adequate supply of greenstuffs, instead of luring the bulk of our young men and women away with glittering promises of half-price accommodation and rail fares refunded to anyone who gads about in the potato fields for a week or more."

Hardly less outspoken are the comments of the Yorkshire and East Lancs Highways Committee. "It is a stab in the back," said the Secretary. "Intending holiday-makers have a right to know *all* the possibilities open to them before deciding where to go, and this action of the Ministry's is clearly an attempt to rush people into committing themselves before local authorities have had a chance to prepare and distribute their own posters and leaflets. Snow-shovelling on a crisp January day, to mention but one of the attractions we have to offer, brings a flush of health to the cheek and a sparkle to the eye that will make any girl the envy of her colleagues when the time comes to pack away the Wellingtons and sou'wester and return to the boredom and discomfort of life on an office stool. Shovels are supplied free, by the way, and a nip of rum all round may be ordered by the Committee's doctor in exceptionally invigorating weather."

It is pointed out locally that the short winter days allow much more time to be allotted for sing-songs and darts in

the shovellers' hostels than is possible for those who take their holidays during the long sweltering days of October and November.

Opinion at the headquarters of the Ouse and Welland Conservancy Board was divided as to the extent to which the Ministry's propaganda would hit their plans for a big Floodworkers' Holiday drive later in the year. "Our season generally begins in March," shouted the Chief Conservator above the roar of the sluices, "and it is a matter for debate whether a couple of weeks' hard slogging on the dykes at that time of year should be reckoned as a very late holiday in 1948 or a very early one in 1949. It's a good open-air life, plenty of excitement, with a certain amount of boating thrown in at very reasonable cost. Healthy, too. After forty-eight hours of ramming clay into sandbags and heaving them into a breached bank you sleep like a log, believe me. If you can be spared, that is," he added with a chuckle. He wrenched at a lever as he spoke and a thousand million gallons of pent-up headwater went thundering down the New Cut into the sea. "That's a thing you won't see in a twelvemonth of potato-lifting," he pointed out proudly.

Most concerned of all at the Ministry's action are the seaside landladies. They complain that the competition is killing them. "The trouble is we've nothing really in the way of work to offer people," said one sadly. "They won't come nowadays without they feel they're putting something of national importance into bags and such-like. There's little but sand and stones hereabouts, unless it's the sea-water—and that don't overflow, not to mention." Reports from popular watering-places all agree that unless an urgent demand arises for properly-bagged sand or possibly for certain varieties of seaweed, the seaside holiday trade is doomed.

An official at the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries commented yesterday, in reply to a series of questions on the Ministry's attitude: "Oh, that. You had better see somebody on the Ag. side about that. I'm Fish." H. F. E.

o o

Democracy at the Nursery End

SPEAKING in the first of a series of politico-sportive broadcasts from the Pavilion at Lord's, the M.C.C. Chief Whip said:

My object in addressing you to-night is to clear up any possible misunderstanding regarding the M.C.C.'s attitude towards batsmen. This is a matter of vital interest to every lover of cricket, and I hope you will follow me attentively for the next few minutes.

The M.C.C. has always recognized that the batsman fulfils a function which is necessary to a well-regulated game of cricket. We have never sought to deny that the batting side, provided they have been chosen in accordance with certain principles on which I hope we are all agreed, can act as a useful check on a too impetuous fast bowler and provide healthful exercise for the fieldsmen; and you can altogether discount any rumours you may have heard that the M.C.C. intends in time to abolish batting altogether. Such an act would be repugnant to the sturdy common-sense which is our national heritage, and we do not contemplate it.

Unfortunately, the constitutional powers of a batsman to delay the fielding side's aim of getting him out have recently been flagrantly abused by a small reactionary party, who owe their skill as cricketers to the mere accident of their having been born in Australia. On one occasion after another these men have exercised what practically amounts to an absolute veto on the efforts of our bowlers to hit the stumps, and have amassed in the process an amount of runs far in excess of their reasonable requirements. Up to now the M.C.C. has deliberately refrained from legislative action, trusting to effect an amicable compromise with the party in question; but matters have been brought to a head by the attitude adopted by Mr. Bradman and his followers at Trent Bridge. Here, in defiance of the wishes of several thousands of spectators, who had paid good money to see England win, the Australians first of all took full advantage of the reasonable and co-operative attitude of our own batsmen, and then, when they themselves were at the wicket, exacted the last ounce of party



COLD WATER TREATMENT

"I'm sorry, but that word 'Germany' always makes me suspicious."



"So that's what they meant when they said they would meet us half-way over the petrol."

advantage. Such a state of affairs cannot be allowed to continue without endangering the prestige of English cricket; and the M.C.C. has accordingly passed the following rule, to come into effect at 11.30 A.M. on Thursday, June 24th:

"If a batsman, being a native of Australia, has scored fifty runs or remained at the wicket for two hours, his bat shall be removed and a left-handed (or, in the case of a left-handed batsman, a right-handed) mashie-niblick substituted."

If this moderate measure does not have the desired effect, the M.C.C. will not hesitate to pass further legislation, retrospective if necessary, so that the clearly expressed wishes of the people may be carried out.

In conclusion, I should like to say a word about the broadcast to be given by Mr. Bradman to-morrow evening. Any British subject is of course at liberty to listen to this broadcast if he chooses, and the M.C.C. does not propose to take any action against such listeners; but it is my duty to warn you in advance that anything Mr. Bradman may say on this question will inevitably be inspired by motives of purely party advantage. I trust you will not be deceived

by any emotional appeal; but continue to give your confidence to the M.C.C., whose aim has always been, and always will be, to seek the good of the majority of cricket-lovers. Good night.

Serial Story

HE rained upon her face hot, hungry kisses, Crushing her to him in his arms, thick-sinewed. She murmured blissfully "My cave-man! this is (To be continued.)"

She felt a flood of passion through her spreading. This was True Love. She could not be deluded. She wore his ring, expecting soon their wedding (To be concluded.)

She lived in rich contentment, free from worry, Till she received a letter from a friend To say her young man had a wife in Surrey.

It was

THE END.

M. H.

Customs

I THINK that as good a custom as any to lead off with is the custom of asking people round, or possibly along, after dinner. It is, sociologists tell us, a widespread habit nowadays; and I am not being cynical, just trying to define what the asker and the asked are thinking as they hang up their telephone receivers, when I say that it has advantages for both sides of the set-up, saving one side a crescendo of eager cooking and the other the necessity for behaving as invited eaters should. The idea is of course that both sides fix their own dinners first; homely affairs eaten from saucepan to plate with a keen sense of time and of washing-up and, I need hardly say, without coffee, for coffee is the nub of the ensuing evening.

The next stage, known as getting ready, is a process with as wide a range of effort as is anything to do with clothes, and as prone to a bit of mild nagging as any occasion where someone one end of the range is waiting for someone at the other. (I am referring to the visiting side; on the home or receiving side the person ready-first is not concerned with punctuality but with fitting in some quiet reading between sitting down and being chivvied up again.) However, after-dinner visitors are not expected to be absolutely on time, by which I mean they will be allowed more latitude than they are getting—all visitors, always, are frantically expected from zero hour onwards—because they are working from the wrong side of the time limit. To arrive during a meal you are not having, say etiquette authorities, would be a disconcerting experience if it had ever been experienced.

After these preliminaries it is rather an anti-climax to tell my readers that the evening itself is quite straightforward, nothing more than keeping the coffee-spoon out of the cup-handle, not eating more biscuits than people really want people to eat, and knowing when to start going; and of course keeping on talking, I mean collectively. The custom of not sitting in silence, except in deference to the wireless, is so well known that I need only remind my readers how long they consider the shortest silence in social life.

TALKING of coffee just now made me think of coffee-grinding, not perhaps so much a custom as a quick happening behind ramparts of salmon-tins; so that all most people know about any coffee-grinding they put in for is a whirr which they think must mean them, and the next minute a nice tight squashy packet. Another shop custom I should like to bring in is the shop-walker. Statisticians estimate that shop-walkers, kindly folk as they are, their only aim to help others, are in seven cases out of nine (this was easier than making it ten and getting a fraction) approached obliquely, that is half sideways, and with the utmost diffidence lest they should be just someone with no hat. Psychologists have noted, however, that shoppers and shop-walkers have worked up a very satisfactory method of communication, the shoppers assuming a purposeful anxiety which would do no harm to someone it wasn't meant for, and the shop-walkers having ready an answering face, that is an inquiring face, which at once dispels doubt.

Different shops have different customs. Chemists' shops, for instance, make rather a thing of great high counters made of many-coloured jars and bottles, so that the actual chemist blends into the set-up and has to be picked out more carefully than any other kind of shopkeeper. News-agents, on the other hand, set as they are against low counters and flat surfaces, and moving as they do from side

to side, are quite conspicuous. Some shops are made entirely of one substance, some of another; hairdressers' shops are made of looking-glass, fish-shops of marble, book-shops of books. Book-shops, by the way, have the very thoughtful custom of classifying their new books on different tables, so that people wanting an unclassifiable book can see that it is not on any table they are looking at, but that they are getting warm.

Finally I shall mention two of the many customs to be found in the home: memorandum books for telephone numbers, and bread-boards. Telephone number books are noted for their weak start—someone keen writing down the numbers everyone knows—and their gradual climb to indispensability; while a bread-board, even in a room as tradition-ridden as the average kitchen, wins the respect of all who take it in to meals by its quiet habit of leaning-to, between times, in its own little dedicated area.

ANDE.

Sculpture in Battersea Park

TO the London County Council, in association with the Arts Council, belongs the credit of arranging an exhibition of modern European sculpture in a lakeside garden in Battersea Park, in which perfect setting the works will remain on view until September 13th. Ballet, opera, drama, orchestral music, all these arts have enchanted us on summer evenings in the London parks; but a collection of sculpture to provide a semblance of the Luxembourg gardens in miniature—that is a new and brave departure and, if the weather is kind, Londoners will have only themselves to reproach if the experiment is not repeated elsewhere.

Forty-three sculptures, which include three impressive works apiece by Rodin and Maillol, and two each from Epstein and Henry Moore, provide a brief but valuable introduction to European sculpture of the last fifty years. Apart from a few possibly rather abstruse works—the trunkless "Kneeling Figure" in concrete, purely an exercise in the upper and lower limbs, by the Irish sculptor McWilliam, for example, or a characteristically attenuated head by Modigliani which reveals the inspiration of his sculptural portraits in oils—apart from some pieces of this kind which demand an unusual imaginative response from the spectator, there is nothing that should baffle the more inquiring minds in the "heterogeneous company" which a colleague observed sauntering, lounging, sleeping and picnicking among the exhibits.

Moore's "Three Standing Figures"? No, surely there is nothing in this widely publicized group to disturb any mind that has ever marvelled at some massive, primeval form of nature. There they stand, these sexless sempiternal women hewn in stone, like a cromlech in mysterious communion. Finely placed though they are at the foot of two beeches, their ideal setting would be the crest of a tor, outlined against the sky, and seemingly springing from the rock.

Almost all the sculptures, in fact, gain immeasurably by their imaginative placing. Here one can gaze up at Rodin's superb bronze of St. John the Baptist proclaiming his message from the summit of a knoll, turn to admire Charles Wheeler's sylph in green bronze dancing by the lakeside, and reflect that—next to some Italian courtyard—no happier background could be found for Jonzen's terra-cotta figure than the parched earth of flower-beds beneath a June sky.

N. A. D. W.

At the Pictures

L'Homme au Chapeau Rond—My Sister and I—Sitting Pretty

I HAD thought that *Monsieur La Souris* was the last of RAIMU's films we should see; a pity, from one point of view, that it was not, for *L'Homme au Chapeau Rond* (Director:



[*L'Homme au Chapeau Rond*

CHAPEAU D'HOMME

Lisa LUCY VALNOR
Nicolas RAIMU

PIERRE BILLON) shows him in a completely unfamiliar, uncharacteristic atmosphere—and, indeed, in an unsuccessful film, though I have no wish to be as discouraging and disparaging about it as most writers have been. Say what you like against this picture, it never loses your interest; and it is undeniable that RAIMU's own performance will—as some of the publicity rather eccentrically puts it—"long not be forgotten." It is his first tragic part: the deceived husband, after his wife's death, driven by his unhappiness into deliberately causing misery in others. "*Ce qui nous transforme*," he says to one of his victims, "*c'est le malheur*"—and the theme of the story (from DOSTOIEVSKY's "The Eternal Husband") is the last stage of his own transformation, from a kindly easy-going father to a sinister shambling buffoon obsessed with revenge. I think it is the buffoonery (the publicity's suggestion that his part is "without comic relief" is quite unjustified) that is the main reason for the unsatisfactoriness of the film considered as a whole; there

are passages of some length, almost self-contained, that seem quite out of key with the predominant tone of the narrative. But I don't agree with one published verdict that the picture is profoundly depressing. Visually, like nearly all French films, it offers much pleasure (nothing subtly unusual, but there are many moments that stick in the memory—for one, I remember a grotesquely pleasing little shot of two figures staggering through a moonlit garden); there are some very touching scenes involving the little daughter, LUCY VALNOR; and RAIMU himself, menacing or clowning, is seldom less than brilliant.

I think also that the critics have been rather too hard on *My Sister and I* (Director: HAROLD HUTT). I certainly don't go very far the other way; I agree that it is undistinguished; but I must admit I found it vaguely entertaining. It is an adaptation of EMERY BONETT's novel *High Pavement*, and such of its defects as do not arise from the novel itself seem to me to be points of detail, points of detail where British films used always to be going wrong, but where (I had thought) most were nowadays to be trusted. I mean those corny little touches put in without any excuse at all except the certainty that the simple, easily-amused members of the audience will laugh at them. The elderly lady sees a man kissing a girl, turns and looks into the camera, and says "Really!"; the bright young woman flashes an exasperated eye skyward just before the camera moves away from her at the ending of a colloquy; the maid ejaculates "Oo-er!" when she is enthralled in the audience at a play. There will always be people to laugh at these things, but their laughter is a trivial and worthless reward when the same things irritate so many other people. *My Sister and I* has far too many such moments, and is no masterpiece from any point of view; I don't want to see it again. But it didn't bore me at the time.

Sitting Pretty (Director: WALTER LANG), a really light-hearted domestic comedy, I liked. Expertly handled, admirably played, consistently funny, it may nevertheless be in danger (I write without having read or heard any other opinions) of a tepid welcome from some critics because it isn't "important," and because, even so, it isn't from the hand of one of the canonized masters of comedy such as Preston Sturges. I want to record that I enjoyed it and I think it deserves praise, apart from its comic effectiveness, for sheer all-round skill of presentation. It is based on the idea of a "baby-sitter" who turns out to be male, with the glacially disapproving efficiency to be expected of a character played by CLIFTON WEBB; and the dénouement is the weak point, being the old cliché of the secretly-written best-seller about the scandals of a suburban community. But the film is made attractive by the beautiful competence of the players (MAUREEN O'HARA, ROBERT YOUNG as the mother and father of three troublesome children; Mr. WEBB; and many "bit" players in a long cast) and the credible, freshly amusing accent given to quite familiar situations by an experienced director. I can't remember when a basically ordinary, "easy" comedy gave me such a pleasant impression before, or made me laugh so much. R. M.



[*My Sister and I*

COIFFURES DE DAMES

Robina Adams SALLY ANN HOWES
Victoria Camelot MARTITA HUNT



The Cup

"HERE is the cup."

But instead of taking the cup at once, the jockey said to the lady as she stood holding it out to him: "Perhaps you would like to hear how I won it. Well, I didn't much like my mount. Seemed to fancy himself too much. Would take off yards before it had any need to do so. Thought it could jump anything, I suppose. Well, of course it couldn't: the second fence had to be taken right: too big for fancy tricks: and my fool of a horse takes off as usual, thinking he was a bird: but he wasn't, and he just charges into it, and comes on turning over and over. Me, I was more like a bird; but I hits the ground eventually, and hits it pretty hard; but no harm done, and I gets up and runs after my mount, which was up a bit before me, and I was gaining on him, gaining a yard in ten, and would have soon caught him. And then I says to myself: If I can overtake my fool of a mount like this, why not go on and overtake the others? And what's the use of him anyway? Well, I puts on a little more speed, and I'm soon overhauling the field, in spite of the bit of a lead they got while I was sailing through the air on to my head, all through that fool of a horse thinking that he was a bird, as I said.

"At the next fence they were all just ahead of me, so I had it all to myself and I checked my pace a little, and cleared it quite easily. It doesn't do to rush your fences, you know. That's what my fool of a horse couldn't understand. Well, I puts on pace again as soon as I landed, and very soon I began to catch up the outsiders and pass them. I took the next fence just as easily, and between it and the one after, which was the fifth, I got into the leading bunch among the first three or four horses. At the next

fence one of the silly blighters came down, but I saw no difficulty in it; I just soared over it, and then I was running third, level with one other. I noticed the riders looking down at me then with a rather jealous look. And I'll tell you why. It was just about then that I began to see that I was going to win that race. And they could see it just as well as I could. That's why they were looking nasty at me. And there were they riding those lumbering great horses, while I was loose and free and running light. Naturally they wished they was me. And I saw their horses were beginning to tire, while I was as fresh as ever. And every fence we came to tired them a bit more; but they didn't tire me, no more than hedges tire blackbirds. A few more of them and we were in the straight and only one horse near me, and he tired. I hardly bothered to pass him, it was so easy. So I waited alongside of him until we neared the last fence, and then I just strolled past him like going out for a walk. And when I saw the crowd and the judge's box just a little way ahead, I thought I'd better win by a handsome margin, to show what I could do. I was still holding my whip, and, as the other fellow was using his, I used mine too, so as to get as much stimulus as his horse was getting. And it is a stimulus too; it helped me on a lot. And I was leading by fifty yards as I passed the post, as everyone knows. And that's how I won the Cup. I should think it's the first time a man has ever won a big race like that one, on his feet."

"I should say so," said the nurse. "But I don't know much about racing. Now you must drink this and go to sleep again."

And she put the tea-cup gently into his hands.

D.



An Innocent in Canada

VII—Vancouver, B.C.

(Mr. Punch's Special Correspondent is spending a few weeks in Canada.)

WHEN Don Bradman was in Vancouver he described the Brockton Point cricket ground as "undoubtedly the most beautiful in the world." He also told them to get their grass in the outfield cut really short. I did not of course see the master's innings, but from those two statements I believe it could be reconstructed ball by ball. I should give him about eighty-five or ninety—bad light stopped play. This praise of the Stanley Park Lord's is high indeed, coming from one who must find almost every cricket ground a paradise. A cricketer's aesthetic judgment is based very strongly on the statistics of the game: any ground is exquisitely lovely if he gets fifty or a hundred on it, and even a Canterbury or a Worcester becomes a blasted heath when the scorers put a nought after his name. I support Bradman in his estimate of Brockton Point, without associating myself in any way with his instructions about the grass in the outfield. It didn't trouble me in the slightest.*

Right across Canada, in Montreal, Ottawa and the prairie towns, I was told "You'll love B.C.; it's so English," and in my mind I fashioned the picture of a land flowing with real pubs instead of "beverage rooms," with rich green grass instead of thin brown stubble, tea instead of coffee, a variety of consonants instead of a repetition of double "r's," and cricket instead of baseball. I even hoped, fancifully, for a mild form of food rationing to halt the ruinous drain of buttons from my waistcoat. Well, the picture was false. I found Vancouver very green and extravagantly beautiful, but its essential Englishness



"If only you'd been here last month."

escaped me. Maybe it is more real than apparent. Behind closed doors the inhabitants of Vancouver may drop their North American accents and dawdle affectionately over a long English "A," switch off the central heating and huddle round a smoky open fire, and so on. And they may not.

On a first analysis the outward unEnglishness of Vancouver is amazing. Greater Vancouver is only about sixty

*I made nine (9) of the best runs in my life.

years old and its population of 454,000 (official 1948 estimate) is overwhelmingly British by racial origin. Out of a total city population of 351,000 (in 1941), 150,000 were English, 78,000 Scottish and 40,000 Irish. There were only 14,000 Scandinavians and 8,000 French. How, then, is it possible for the British to acclimatize and adjust themselves so quickly to the North American way of life? The answer is, of course, that Britain and the British way of life (British newspapers, radio and games, for instance) are nearly 7,000 miles away, whereas the United States boundary line is only fifteen miles due south. An English manufacturer who emigrated to B.C. only five months ago now takes his post-prandial quota of gum as a matter of course. It takes about four months, he explained, to develop the know-how about parking the stuff: then it's easy. After only four days I found myself hot-dogging and pop-corning it like a native when I visited the Capilano baseball stadium.

The Vancouver Capilanos were playing the Tacoma Reds, so that the contest had a sort of international flavour. Naturally I rooted madly for Vancouver. Then, as the sixth inning opened, I looked at my programme and discovered that only three of my heroes—only three of the nineteen players on the Capilanos' roster—were Canadians. The rest were imports:

Bob Costello—pitcher—born Spokane, Wash., 1923. Height 6 ft. 2 ins.; weighs 190 lbs. Bats right, throws right.

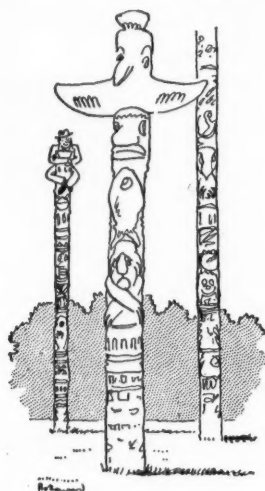
Frank Mullins—outfielder—born Roscoe, Calif., 1924. Height 5 ft. 11 ins.; weighs 165 lbs. Bats left, throws right.

I tried to console myself with another hot dog, but when the Tacoma coach urged one of his star hitters into action with the memorable words, "Come on, there, Joey boy. Have a good night," I began very gently to boo.

The C.P.R. made Vancouver possible, but it has not reduced the height of the Great Divide by one cubit. Along the Pacific coastlands geography has reasserted itself: the easy routes for the automobile and the baseball transfer system lie in the valleys of the Coast, Cascade and Selkirk mountains—from south to north. And it seems to me that the natural routes are still (in many ways) far more important than the artificial ones engineered through the Kicking Horse and Yellowhead passes. The Rockies are still a formidable barrier: the 49th parallel is merely a road sign. So it is not really surprising to find the peoples of the Pacific coast, on both sides of the boundary, united in mild hostility to the older east. California knows that it has everything, but Boston, New York and Philadelphia won't admit that it has anything more than an upstart precocity and a streak of peacock exhibitionism. Vancouver knows that it is an earthly paradise, but Quebec, Montreal and Toronto are contemptuous of the claims of the *nouveau riche*. Easterners say that Vancouver's tomato-juice tastes like gasoline, that its manners are boorish and its culture non-existent. Vancouver considers eastern Canada a bed of intrigue, snobbishness and decadence. And out in no man's land Winnipeg shoots in both directions simultaneously.

Is there anything to be said for Vancouver's critics? Not very much, I think. The tomato-juice tasted all right to me, and I found the British Columbian extremely polite and courteous. True, Vancouver has no "live" playhouse and calls all her cinemas theatres, but she is building a new university at a staggering speed. I motored over the campus, miles and miles of it, and inspected the building operations. The original edifice is a little stone cairn, erected by a party of students to demonstrate their disgust

at the red tape tying them to old inadequate premises. (Given the necessary permits for cairn-stones this idea might work in Britain.) Most of the new faculty buildings are of poured concrete and wooden frame construction with mushroom added. Other buildings are ingenious agglomerations of old army shelters. When Vancouver gets down to the job of supplying herself with other cultural amenities—art



galleries, concert halls and real theatres—eastern Canada will have to look to its tomato juice. British Columbians would have built Rome in a day—before breakfast.

Like so many Canadian cities Vancouver has a serious car-parking problem. One evening it lost me a smorgasbord supper offered by a typically hospitable Canadian. We drove into the city over the Lions Gate Bridge and searched for a vacant parking-meter. After about a dozen circuits of every accessible block we at last managed to locate a few feet of unoccupied kerb. Then, by dint—and I mean dint—of powerful bumper-work we enlarged the gap until it would take the elongated American car. But by this time our reservation at the restaurant had expired. I used the occasion to put in a plug for the British car with its modest dimensions and wonderful manoeuvrability. In Canada a small fortune awaits the inventor of the stacking automobile.*

Then there is the weather. Vancouver is commonly supposed to enjoy a climate rather like Britain's: the advertisements say—"You will live longer and enjoy life more in Nature's evergreen playground. Never cold—never hot . . . invigorating all-year climate . . ." The truth is, however, that Vancouver enjoys more than twice as much rain as London (about 57 inches a year) and far more fog than either Greenwich or Scarborough. "If only you'd been here last month," one enthusiast told me, "you'd have seen the mountains." Still, the moisture does a lot of good. It over-feeds the giant cedars and redwoods until they are tall enough to be carved into totem-poles and fat enough to be tunnelled through; it keeps the greens of the city's fourteen golf courses in perfect condition, and it helps the spin-bowlers on Saturday afternoons.

* Correction: In an earlier report I described and deplored the Canadian habit of opening the car door to signal a left or right turn, stop, slow down, breakdown or pick-up. It now appears that the Canadian winter is to blame. Here, cars have their side windows fitted with anti-frost panels of double glass (like double windows) which cannot be lowered. Manufacturers of automatic signalling devices, please note.

Yes, let's get back to cricket, and to Stanley Park of which Kipling wrote—"A little axe-work and road-metalling gives a city one of the loveliest water-girt parks that we have outside the tropics." The grass is green even if the wicket itself is brown and coconut-matted. Just beyond the boundary lies the blue Pacific busy with shipping and seagulls—perfect targets for a "six." The pavilion is thoroughly English, with odours of linseed oil, tea and embrocation. There is a little paddock for relations and friends and a tremulous wooden gate (with a broken catch) leading to the arena. Are there no differences, then, between cricket in Vancouver (and Victoria—I sampled that too) and cricket in the shires? Well . . . yes. The second wicket had fallen and the innocent was fumbling with his pads—visitors always go in at number four when Vancouver is entertaining—when the captain tapped or smote him on the shoulder and offered a hip-flask. How could I explain, without hurting Canadian feelings, that artificial stimulants are taboo in English cricket and frowned on even in horse-racing? There are moments when pure reason is out of place and scruples are best left hidden. I grabbed the flask and gurgled. "You should get a century at least after that," he said with a most peculiar smile.

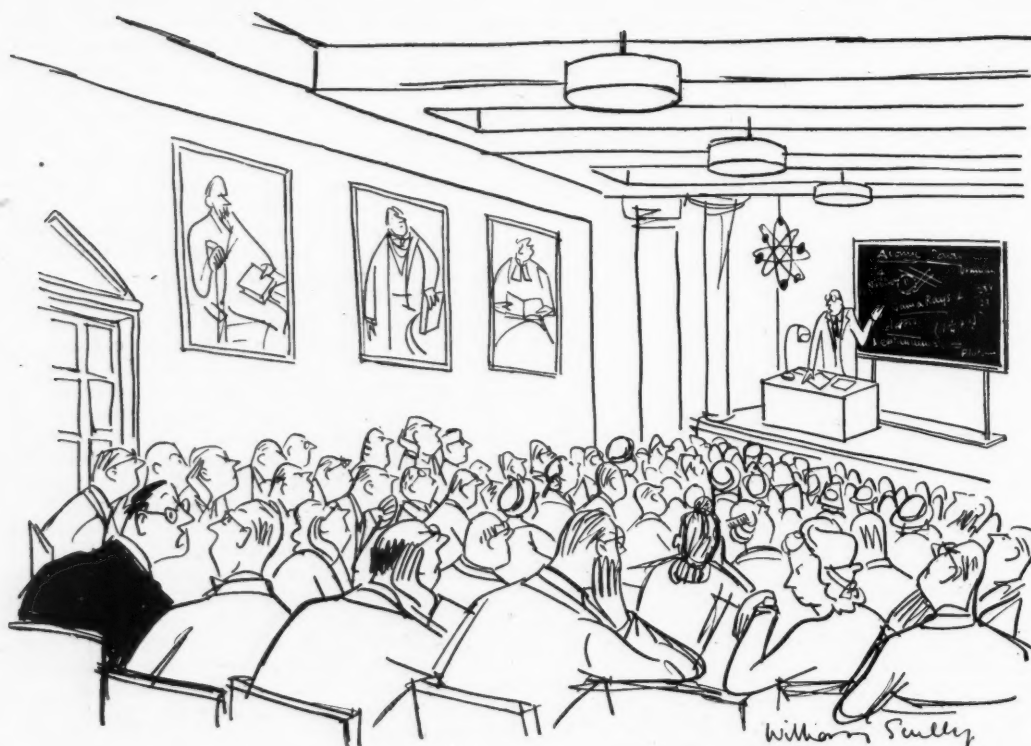
The fielding in Canadian cricket is excellent. I attribute this to baseball: everybody throws like a Washbrook or a Compton and there are no butter-fingers. Off the field Canadian cricketers speak North American or the Canadian King's English, but on the field "ya" becomes a precise and highly sibilant "yes," and "sure" becomes "come on" or "run, you fool." Tradition, you know. All the same I am not quite sure whether I approve of schedule (pronounced "skedule") for season ticket, and I refer the following quotation back to the M.C.C.—"Here are sights to conjure mental pictures of faraway and romantic parts. In Stanley Park itself you can catch the sporting spirit of old England as cricketers 'make a hundred for six wickets.'"

What else can I tell you about this wonderful city? How can I annoy the other eight provinces? Does it help



when I announce that Vancouver has two hundred and sixty-seven beauty parlours and sixty-three "beer parlors," three hundred and thirty-nine taxis and eighteen undertakers (not "morticians"), 16,249 dogs and eighty-seven hot-dog stands, eight hundred and sixty miles of sidewalk and forty-one chiropractors? No? And not a single mention of salmon, shipbuilding or lumbering. Ah, well . . .

Hob.



"I wonder if he's said yet, 'If anybody can't bear will they put up their hand?'"

A Norfolk Broadside

The Race (Acle)

THERE was nothing between the two yachts on their moorings at Acle—

Tern the trim cutter and *Coot* the auxiliary sloop; Both hung their dish-cloths to dry on the topping-lift tackle, And both had had lunch off identical tins of pea-soup.

The captains shake hands with a gruff "Let the better boat win it,"

And it's Ho! for the race, for the race, come fair weather or gales!

Cast off the mooring-ropes! Little occurs for a minute, The competitors having omitted to hoist up their sails.

Now they're off! They're away! But at once *Tern*'s in danger of stranding.

Bad luck!—no, the skipper's skipped out and shoved off from the mud.

Coot is—what is *Coot* doing?—great heavens, they've gybed her all-standing!

Not all standing—no, two of them sat on the deck with a thud.

She describes a few figures-of-eight in assorted directions, But there she is back on her course and in headlong pursuit!

Tern's rigged her gramophone, playing sea-shanty selections Subtly designed to attack *Coot*'s morale—cunning brute.

But *Coot* is as clever. He sees that this noise they are making

Will cover the sound of his engine; he gives it a turn,

Then opens it up to full throttle—however mistaking The notch marked "Ahead" for the similar one marked "Astern."

The astonishment *Tern* feels at seeing his rival retreating Removes his attention from matters like holding his course;

He charges the bank, where some livestock are peacefully eating, And ends with his bowsprit and forestay involved with a horse.

And that's where she stays till the tide helps her off in the morning,

With *Coot* in a similar plight but a different place— A story designed to support the familiar warning That cruising-boats let by the week aren't permitted to race.

JUSTIN.



MULTIPLE STORE

"Do you still sell stamps in these places, please?"

MONDAY, June 14th.

The gentleman who used to go around offering his kingdom, in a sort of reciprocal lease-lend system, in exchange for a horse could scarcely have been more agitated or het up than the House of Commons got to-night over motor-cars. As good-humoured Mr. HUGH GAITSKELL, the Minister of Fuel, will confirm, the motor-car is, these days, one of the most highly explosive of all political topics.

There have been storms in the House over the plans the Government has made to conserve petrol supplies by issuing only the smallest of standard rations. When there was no standard ration at all the carpets were worn threadbare by bearers of monster petitions, asking for it.

But to-night's row was different. It arose out of a Government proposal to put into the Representation of the People Bill a rule that the number of motor-cars used in an election should be severely limited. The view apparently is (monster petitions notwithstanding) that the possession of motor-cars is a sign of great wealth and, therefore, Tory leanings. Palace Yard was packed with the limousines of the Government's supporters who crowded into the Chamber to vote down a Tory proposal that the limitation should not apply.

It was perhaps just as well that there was not too much petrol lying around, so hot and explosive did the House become. The proposal was that in county constituencies the car-limit should be one for every one thousand five hundred electors; in boroughs, one for every two thousand five hundred. (Somebody commented that even buses are not so crowded as that.)

Mr. CHUTER EDE, the Home Secretary, read from his brief that the use of cars had for many years given "certain Parties" an advantage over others. He looked meaningfully at the Conservatives as he said this, and the Conservatives responded with spirit—what one might, in the circumstances, call motor-spirit.

Mr. YORK, for instance, called it "a deliberate attempt to give an advantage to the Party in power" (he presumably meant the present Party in power), and mentioned that it was the most disgusting exhibition of Party politics he had ever known. Even a Liberal, Mr. WILFRID ROBERTS, who rarely rough-houses the Government, cried that he needed two hundred cars in his constituency, but would be allowed only thirty-three—a

Impressions of Parliament

Monday, June 14th.—House of Commons: Car Trouble.

Tuesday, June 15th.—House of Commons: Stands Scotland . . . ?

Wednesday, June 16th.—House of Lords: Thought For Food. House of Commons: Gas Explosion.

Thursday, June 17th.—House of Commons: Mr. Churchill "Cracks."

circumstance which, he thought, would cause discontent and reduce the number of voters.

All sorts of subtle posers were put to Mr. EDE, such as the legality or otherwise of a friendly "lift" to the poll—without any Party bias or interest at all. "That," replied Sir HARTLEY SHAWCROSS, the Attorney-General, darkly, "is for the Courts to decide!" Anyway, the restriction was approved by 269 votes to 114, so perhaps candidates will in future go round offering "A vote, a vote—my horse for a vote!" As radio comedians are apt to say, it makes a nice change.

**Impressions of Parliamentarians**

48. Mr. Brendan Bracken (Bournemouth)

A discussion on the Government's plan to "pinch" (that, your scribe records with a blush, was the actual word used) the twelve University seats, which are to be abolished, lasted a long time but produced no results. The seats are still abolished.

Mr. ANTHONY EDEN announced, amid Conservative cheers and Labour derision, that his Party held itself free to reverse any of the one-sided decisions ordered by the Government on this and cognate issues. And that's how it ended—very, very late at night.

Earlier in the day, Mr. HECTOR HUGHES had shocked the House by suggesting that "silencers" should be provided "to deaden the loud

conversation" in the Reference Room. This vision of strong-arm men with rubber truncheons silencing the Great Elected so startled the Members that they sat silent. And Mr. HUGHES smiled contentedly.

TUESDAY, June 15th.

While their Lordships had a jolly time talking about the sewing of mail-bags in our prisons, and the money allowances (waggishly called the Wages of Sin) to be made to His Majesty's guests thus engaged, the Commons were talking again of the Representation of the People Bill. There were learned (if ineffective) speeches about the antiquity of the City of London as a Parliamentary entity, and the Home Secretary announced that the Cities of London and Westminster would in future form one constituency. In these days of bread rationing, the half-loaf was accepted—but without overwhelming enthusiasm.

Something queer and whimsy happened at Question-time, something that has never, in your scribe's experience, happened before, anywhere: a Scot humbly acknowledged that the English do things so much better!

And, to make the story still more incredible, it has to be recorded that it was that Scot of Scots, Mrs. JEAN MANN, who made the confession. She put it in the form of a question to the Secretary for Scotland, and here are her very words: "*Can my right honourable friend explain why they do things so much better in England than in Scotland?*"

Loud, prolonged and incredulous cheers from the English Members. The Scottish Secretary made protesting noises, and Mrs. MANN, sensing his embarrassment, let the matter drop. But as if to stress that this was no momentary aberration, no verbal flash in the pan, Mrs. MANN was up again a minute later with this: "*Is Scotland to remain always, and for ever, in a ten times worse position than England?*"

This time the welkin was fairly rung by the cheers of the English, and Mrs. MANN sat back with the something-attempted expression of the determined campaigner.

As though to emphasize that he was not to be left behind in this new-found national modesty, Mr. WOODBURN, the Scottish Secretary, fairly atom-bombed his native land with the announcement that he was "not sure the kilt was the best dress for office work." Scots Members moaned audibly—one could just hear them above the delighted, exultant (nay, triumphant) roars of the English and Welsh.

Talking of dress, a fashion note this Ascot week: Lady MEGAN LLOYD GEORGE appeared in something that most males took to be the "New Look," in dove grey—and very charming she looked. Miss ALICE BACON, on the other side of the House, introduced a confection in green silk, with spots, which gave an air of coolness to the Labour benches, however hot the debate became. And Mr. "GEORDIE" BUCHANAN, the Pensions Minister, brought in his own New Look—a pale-blue sports coat and grey flannels. Other Ministers looked at him a bit doubtfully—but GEORDIE makes his own rules, sartorial and other.

WEDNESDAY, June 16th.—Lord BRUCE OF MELBOURNE, who used to be Prime Minister of Australia, jerked the House of Lords to grim reality to-day by "calling attention"—as the official phrase goes—to the world food situation. And very strikingly he did it, even if what he had to say was almost frightening.

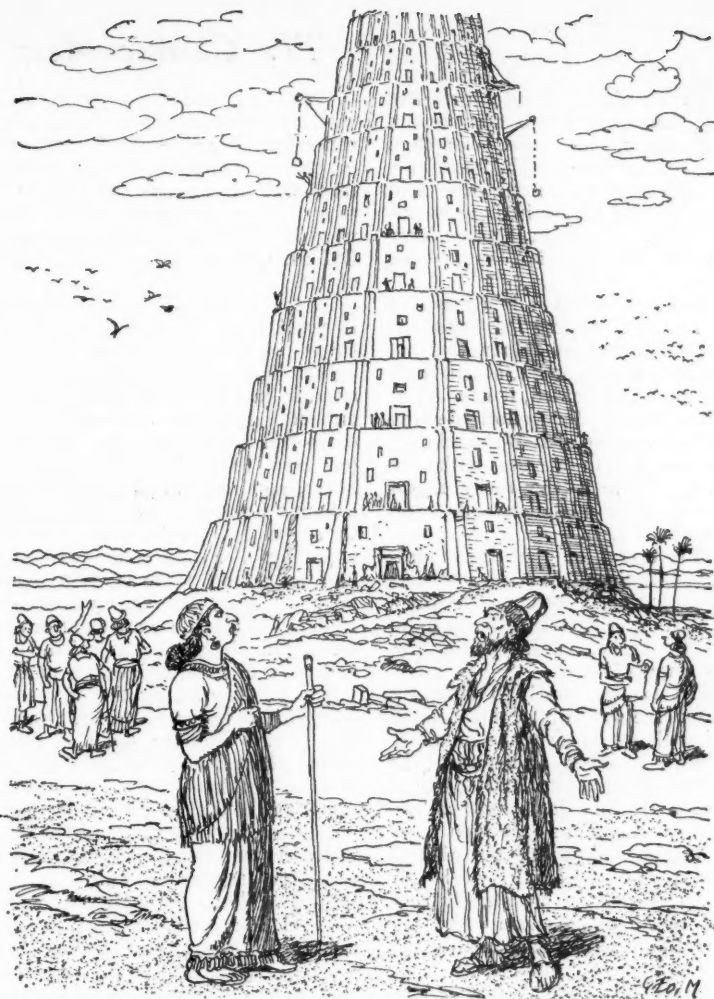
He pointed out that a race was going on between food production and the increase in the world's population. The population was rising by some 20,000,000 a year, but food production was not greatly in excess of pre-war figures. The complications did not end there—land erosion was reducing the cultivable areas, rats and other pests were robbing the human race of food, and too much emphasis was being put on manufacturing industries at the expense of that most vital of all industries, agriculture. Yet another was the fact that all nations are apt to spend on armaments the labour and the steel that could more profitably go to the production of food.

And all this was giving Communism the best weapon it could desire, said Lord BRUCE impressively.

One speaker commented that "a visitor from Mars might think this a crazy world." Such an impression would not necessarily be confined to a Martian.

Over in the Commons the final explosion of the Gas Bill was taking place. Mild Mr. HUGH GAITSKELL, the Minister of Fuel, seemed to act like a lighted taper to explosive Mr. BRENDAN BRACKEN, who led the Opposition attack on the measure. And as time went on the two functions became interchangeable, with the result that whenever either right hon. gentleman opened his mouth the other went up in flames.

They argued and battled, they snapped and indulged in repartee, they uttered breezily-biting comments, and they uttered biting-breezy comments.



"The Borough Council Engineer says the top ten storeys must come down—some nonsense about controls."

It was all very diverting, if not precisely relevant, and when the time came to vote on the Third Reading everybody was in the buoyant condition normally associated with coal-gas.

And the Bill was read a third time by 340 votes to 190, so Britain's gas industry is well on the way to being nationalized. Mr. BRACKEN will be lonely without the Bill, with which he has lived so many weeks; and, truth to tell, Mr. GAITSKELL will probably be a trifle lonely without Mr. BRACKEN. Judging from their facial expressions, however, these deprivations each can bear with fortitude.

THURSDAY, June 17th.—When Mr. MORRISON denied (or did not confirm) reports that Mr. DALTON was to preside over a Ministerial inquiry

into the working of the nationalized industries, Mr. WINSTON CHURCHILL smiled cherubically, and experienced onlookers knew at once that something amusing was coming.

Mr. CHURCHILL rose, walked slowly to the Table, and expressed his pleasure at the announcement. Had it been otherwise, said he, it would have been a case of "Satan investigating sin." This was greeted with an all-Party, and strictly non-partisan, roar.

The Cynical Sub-Editor

"THANKS FOR SYMPATHY

Mr. and Mrs. ——— would like to thank relatives and friends who sent kind messages of congratulation on their golden wedding anniversary."

Announcement in Sussex paper.

The Cosmic Mess

MANY of its uncountable readers have written to this column about its lone campaign against the Arrogance of the Aeroplane. Most are sufferers from the said Arrogance, and all are in support but one, a pilot. His main message, very courteously delivered, is "Don't blame the pilots."

First, he says that it is a waste of time for this column to take the numbers of air-things and report them. This column is not going to accept that: for, as already recorded, it has had at least one success. It has noticed many air-things marked "H B-something" trying to get in at the bathroom window. That is the Swiss marking, this column understands, and the bathroom, it seems, was the favourite target of the Swiss bird-world. But since this column struck, and reported an H B-something, there have been fewer H B-somethings quite so near the bathroom, though they are nearly always low.

But let us attend fairly to the pilot's tale; for the last thing this column would wish would be to be unfair to the pilots. "When an aircraft," he says, "is authorized to land at one of London's airfields, it is not, as you suppose, at the pilot's discretion as to what height and course the aircraft flies when over the London area. All flights over London are strictly controlled by an organization called the Metropolitan Control Zone, and before any aircraft can even enter this zone (its area is roughly Luton—Gravesend—Tonbridge—Reading—Luton) it has to obtain permission—direct two-way communication is constantly maintained between the Control and the aircraft when nearing and after entering the Zone. Permission having been given for the aircraft to enter the Zone, at one of the authorized 'Lanes', the Controller then *directs the aircraft to fly at a given height, and a course to steer*. This order has to be strictly adhered to, the pilot, although Captain and therefore in supreme command of his aircraft, has to obey this direction from the Controller, because the Captain understands that safety in the air is of paramount importance . . . So, sir, even if I was approaching your home *at, say, 500 feet*, I would not gain height to avoid your threatened missiles,* but carry on, directed by my Zone Controller."

* This is a reference to the man next-door who likes firing off rockets. This column thought it might help if he fired off a rocket or two at bathroom fliers.

Well, this column accepts all that, with many thanks—as far as London is concerned. It will not much comfort or persuade the many sufferers who write from Oxford, for example, where, it seems, there are stern prohibitions which are by no means always obeyed. Oxford, perhaps, might try a rocket or two.

As to London, of course, the pilot's tale makes the whole thing worse, and shows the Arrogance of the Air in the ugliest light. The revelation that an aircraft can be deliberately, sternly, ordered, directed, commanded and compelled to fly "at, say, 500 feet" (or even 1,000) over this column's house, and millions of other London columns' houses—even, it seems, when the sky is blue and cloudless—is simply appalling. For those columns who live near an airport there is, perhaps, no hope. But here, the uncountable readers will recall, we are eight or nine miles from the nearest aviation-den—and most of London is much more.

The pilot's case, by the way, deals only with *incoming* air-things. Granted the Initial Blunder by the Initial Asses—the planting of air-ports just West of London—one has to concede some part of the case, where incoming nuisances are being guided in by instruments. But it does not seem to cover the *outgoing* pests who seem to be just as numerous. Once they are clear of Heathrow or Northolt why should they not be diverted north or south of the Big City? For one thing, this column ignorantly suggests, there might then be less danger of a collision over London.

Even the courteous pilot, one gathers, is on our side: for, having defended the pilots, he says:

"I suggest that instead of tackling this very important problem from your present angle . . . you consult the joint heads of the Metropolitan Control Zone, the Air Ministry, and the Ministry of Civil Aviation, as to the possibility of building a 'Master Airfield', not in or near a built-up area but as near as possible to the Capital, so that when extreme Instrument Flight Rules exist, the aircraft can be diverted to this stand-by airfield, as I am sure that you are only troubled by low-flying aircraft* when weather conditions are so poor that the only means of landing with safety is by instruments, and possibly for further

* Sorry. This column can't accept that. They are so noisy now, especially the big four-bumbed beasts, they *all* trouble us.

safety the aircraft is flying below cloud-base."

Thank you, dear pilot. An excellent area for your new airfield would be the empty banks of the Thames below Gravesend—at Cliffe or behind the Blyth Sands. Alack-and-a-day, that those good schemes were rejected by the Initial Asses!

Here is a sad word from a sufferer near London Airport: "Here on the line of the runways airplanes appear to be missing our houses by only twenty feet or so; and, as one neighbour said, he sometimes fears to straighten his back if he happens to be weeding onions. Hair-brushes dance off dressing-tables—conversation stops—soot is driven down chimneys—and in one case at least a window has broken . . . The Minister of Civil Aviation has power to make regulations concerning both noise and vibration under the Air Navigation Act, 1947, Section 2. In a letter from the Ministry of March 14th, 1948, we were told that 'the matter is under active consideration'".

Hooray!

But what is being *done*?

Another eloquent and angry correspondent says: "The phenomenon is rapidly becoming Public Nuisance Number 1: and it must be fought ere it drives us completely mad." This writer really knows something ("For thirty years I have earned my living on the mechanical side of these air-things"), and he hotly rejects the conventional answer that "Nothing can be done".

"I flatly deny", he says, "that they cannot be silenced if required. There's nothing in science or mechanics standing in the way—you have experienced the sweet serenity of the — automobile, no doubt—the principles of the aircraft and car motors are exactly the same."

"Your official obstructor will almost certainly trot out the one about 'a great percentage of the noise is caused by the propellers thrashing the air'. Don't let that put you off—it's all eye-wash and prop-wash, nothing more. The sound of four propellers lashing the air (less motor noise) would be a sweet lullaby, and at any rate one which we would gladly put up with, given the chance."

"Now," says this stalwart person, "the reason that 'they' don't or won't do anything—our old friends £ s. d. . . Silencing an engine of this kind means that some back pressure is built up against the swift egress of the burnt charge, which is so desirable for gaining

the greatest possible power from a given weight of fuel in the smallest combustion chamber. By restricting the exhaust less power is available for useful work. To retain the same power figure *and* have silence the power unit or engine would have to be larger and heavier and then would need a greater amount of fuel to give the same endurance. Got it? Anything that means more weight in air-things means less performance or *pay-load*, and *pay-load* rules the roost . . .

"If the best we can do at present is a £60 subsidy for each passenger across the Atlantic, there is some argument for a £65 or £70 subsidy plus silencers."

Hear, hear!

"Meanwhile, you and I and the rest of us must continue to fire off our rockets at every legitimate opportunity and air-noise."

These, uncountable readers, are stirring and hope-provoking words. If it is indeed money and not mechanics that maintains the nuisance, the last excuse has gone. This column is still confined to its home by evil-minded bacilli, but it can still draft a Question or two, and send them by post; and it will do its best to keep the cat among these noisy pigeons. A. P. H.

"Good cooking, h. and c."

Holiday advertisement.

Well, if we *must* choose—

Vitrea Circe

THE name of Circe
Is wrongly branded
(Though Homer's verses
Pourtrayed her right)

By heavy-handed
And moral persons
Misunderstanding
Her danger bright.

She used not beauty
For man's beguiling,
She craved no suitor;
Sea-chances brought
To her forest-silent
And crimson-fruited
And snake-green island
Her guests unsought.

She watched those drunken
And tarry sailors
Eat nectar-junket
And Phoenix-nests;
Each moment paler
With pride she shrunk at
Their leering, railing,
Salt-water jests.

They thought to pluck there
Her rosial splendour?
They thought their luck there
Was near divine?

When the feast ended
She rose and struck them
With rod extended
And made them swine.

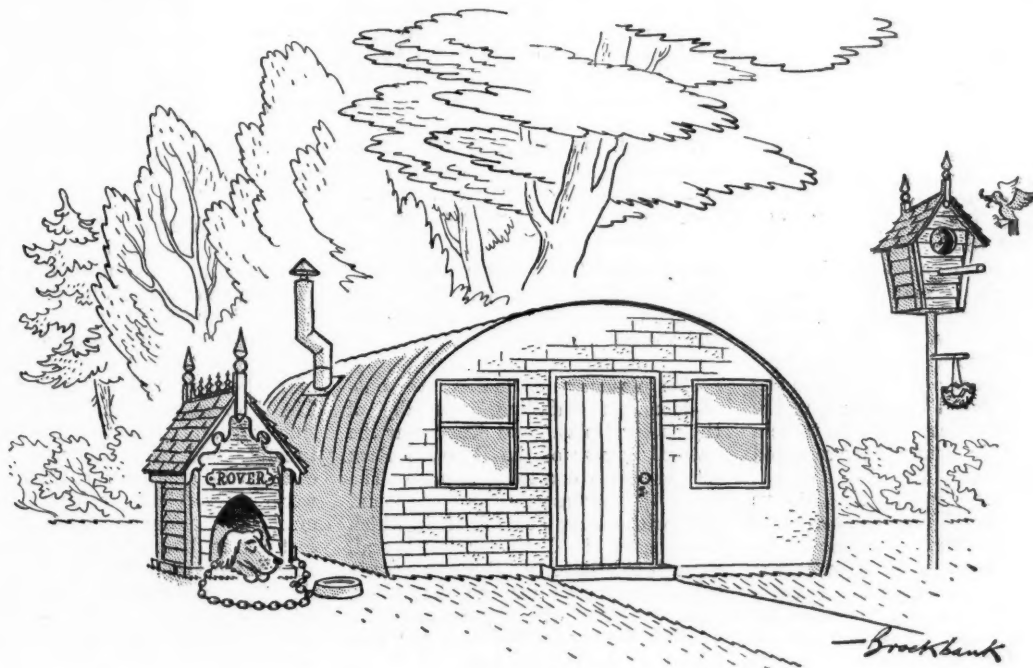
No man with kisses
Or touch she tempted;
She scorned such blisses
And toys, until
There came, undreamt of,
The tough Ulysses,
From fate exempted
By Pallas' will.

Then flashed above her
(Poor kneeling Circe,
Her snares discovered!)

The Hero's blade.

She lay at mercy,
His slave, his lover,
Forgot her curses,
Blushed like a maid.

She'd none to warn her,
He hacked and twisted
The hedge so thorny,
It let him pass.
Her awful distance,
Her vestal scorning,
Were bright as crystal,
They broke like glass. N. W.



LONDON is being treated to a very healthy reminder that the theatre in this country doesn't begin and end with it, as Londoners are too apt to imagine. Under an enterprising arrangement four leading repertories are visiting the St. James's in turn, each for a fortnight, while the British Theatre Group takes their place in the provinces with Mr. Ted Willis's play about the slums, *No Trees in the Street*. If the standard of the other companies comes anywhere near to that of the Liverpool Repertory's *The Cherry Orchard*, with which the season has opened, it will have been entirely justified.

TCHEKOV is a hard test through which these players come with colours flying, giving balance and cohesion to what in uncertain hands can so easily appear an inexplicable madhouse. Mr. JOHN FERNALD, Liverpool's regular producer, has brought out the subtle shades of pathos and the deliciously spontaneous humour of what is one of the loveliest plays in the world, and he is served by a team in the full sense of the word. Miss GLADYS BOOR's *Madame Ranevskaya* sheds a light which sets the curious atmosphere of mingled ecstasy and frustration. It is a performance of such sensitive quality that one wonders how it can possibly have happened that this distinguished actress is not much better known. If we need any persuasion she persuades us that aristocracy is not to be safely lost, even when, as with *Madame Ranevskaya*, it is manifestly incompetent to deal with a changing order. When TCHEKOV wrote this play he can have had no idea that the plight of his scatter-brained but entrancing heroine, who loved every twig in the home she was losing, was soon to be a commonplace in countries far removed from Russia.

I liked very much Mr. DAVID PHETHEAN's *Trophimov*, the perpetual undergraduate, whose struggle to be taken seriously is given an excellent comic twist. And Mr. ERIC BERRY's bouncing merchant, *Lopahin*, with his pathetic attempt to make up in champagne for the rape of the orchard,

At the Play

The Cherry Orchard (ST. JAMES'S)—*As You Like It* (OPEN AIR THEATRE)—*La Vie Cambridgienne* (ARTS, CAMBRIDGE)

Miss NANCIE JACKSON's *Varya*, Mr. CYRIL LUCKHAM's *Gayev*, the speech-making billiards-player, Miss ELAINE WODSON's eccentric governess, and the champion borrower (in whose land the mad English begin to scabble for clay) of Mr. GERALD CROSS are all performances of solid merit.

From June 15th to June 26th the Sheffield Company is presenting Mr. ALFRED SANGSTER's *The Brontës*;

him so near to being a well-developed Mr. Punch that early he won my heart. The *Rosalind* of Miss LESLEY WAREING is spirited and well spoken, and Miss PATRICIA KNEALE's *Celia* is in the very pattern of gay conspiracy. As the banished Duke Mr. TRISTAN RAWSON makes a charming sylvan host, Mr. DAVID READ repeats his gauntly acid *Jaques* of two years ago, and in Mr. JOSEPH O'CONOR there is an *Orlando* of striking romantic quality. With his fine voice and presence this young actor must be in deadly danger of abduction by the lords of celluloid; may he be given strength to resist. The comic vigour of the rustic scenes, the generous use of uncanned music, and Mr. ATKINS' skilful groupings all contribute to a very pleasant evening. On the first night one large drop of rain was recorded on the nose of your critic at 2047 hours, but having perpetrated this supreme gesture of defiance the common enemy withdrew.

To the prime duty of viewing academic problems with detachment this year's Footlights revue, *La Vie Cambridgienne*, added a larger sweep touching such varied national interests as Mr. Priestley's ego, the rigours of immortality in the shiny weeklies, and the British abroad. As usual the all-male cast indulged in female impersonation, from which Newnham and Girton were not immune; and the fact that the producer, Mr. STEPHEN JOSEPH, is Miss Hermione

Gingold's son, was sufficient guarantee of the note of satire's being sustained. Several items might have been pruned, but there remained enough wit and intelligence to float a whole squadron of costlier and sloppier London revues. The show was mounted with effective simplicity, its music was unashamedly tuneful, and the slickness of the changes did amateurs credit. So many were involved in its making that they must share collective praise, but of a cast rich in diverse talent and remarkably intent on being heard at least three are potential recruits for the intimate professional stage—Messrs. JOHN MORLEY, MICHAEL WESTMORE and IAN LANG. ERIC.



[The Cherry Orchard]

THE OLD ORDER AND THE NEW

Pyotr Trophimov MR. DAVID PHETHEAN
Madame Ranevskaya MISS GLADYS BOOR
Yermolai Lopahin MR. ERIC BERRY

Birmingham follows until July 10th with *The Rivals* in modern dress; and during the last fortnight the Bristol Old Vic offers *Hamlet*.

The pleasures of Shakespeare out-of-doors are unfailing, especially of the pastoral plays, and every year the natural beauty of the Regent's Park setting comes as a fresh surprise. The Open Air Theatre gets away to a sound start with an *As You Like It* in which the singing is distinctly good and, difficult to believe, Mr. ROBERT ATKINS takes *Touchstone* for the first time, endowing him with an avuncularity which bears out the affection and confidence of the fair refugees and brings

At the Opera and Ballet

Iolanthe (SADLER'S WELLS)
Les Cloches de Corneville (BOLTONS)
A Caribbean Rhapsody
 (PRINCE OF WALES)

THE D'Oyly Carte Opera Company have brought the Savoy Operas once again to London to mirror us as they did our parents in their clear, fastidious, delicately-distorting depths. Some say that their humour is dated. But though it might be pleasant to look down as from a height upon the foibles of our forbears, it is disturbingly clear that this kind of hill-topper will not do. While there is an England, GILBERT and SULLIVAN will always be topical. In *Iolanthe*, for instance, in the *Fairy Queen's* pronouncements on the dire fate that awaits the House of Lords once *Strephon* gets into Parliament, we hear the voice of Mr. Hugh Dalton. Nor is there any lack of would-be *Strephon* M.P.s who would gladly submit to the inconvenience of being a fairy from the waist up and a mortal from the waist down if that gave them the power to push any Bill they chose through both Houses of Parliament. And we probably shall not have long to wait before someone throws open the House of Lords to pure Intelligence (wearing of course the correct political label), so that

Peers shall teem in Christendom
 And a Duke's exalted station
 Be attainable by Com-
 Petitive Examination.

So we go with unabated delight to see Messrs. GILBERT, SULLIVAN and D'OYLY CARTE "Working up on the old Lines," as Mr. Punch remarked about the first performance of *Iolanthe* nearly sixty-six years ago.

None the less, the performance was very far from perfect. MARTYN GREEN was excellent as the "highly-susceptible Chancel-lor," and his famous songs and step-dancing delighted everyone. *Private Willis* (RICHARD WATSON) and the *Earls Tolloller* and *Mountararat* (LEONARD OSBORN and RICHARD WALKER) came up to expectations also, while the appearance of the chorus of peers, stately, cloaked and coroneted, is as absurd as ever. But what hideously-dressed fairies, with crowns and wands of chromium plate; and what a thrice-hideous Arcadia, with a blue and yellow water-scape enough to set everyone's teeth on edge, is revealed when the curtain rises! The panorama of Pentonville Road that unfolds as one journeys to

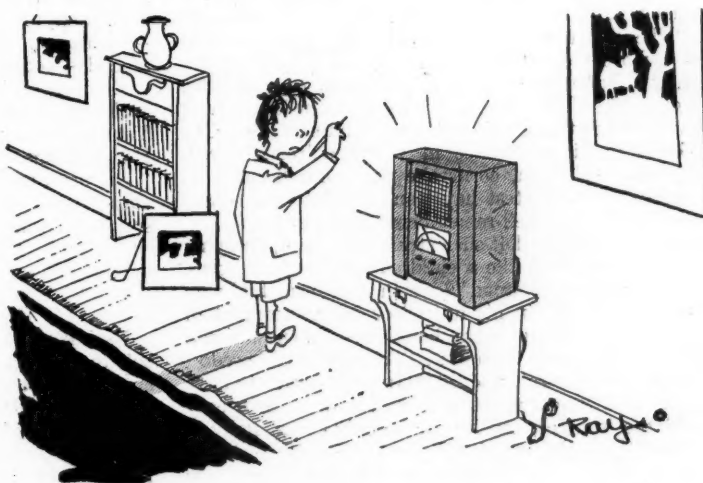
Sadler's Wells in the bus is no worse. The singing of the principal ladies is nowhere more than adequate, and the orchestral playing is, as so often, very poor. It is shameful that SULLIVAN's delicate scores should be treated as they are.

PLANQUETTE's *Les Cloches de Corneville*, of a slightly earlier vintage than *Iolanthe*, is being given at the Bolton's Theatre. This also receives far less than justice. Two pianos are a poor substitute for an orchestra, though this cannot be helped. But no amount of high spirits in the company makes amends for their lack of style and inability to sing. There is a good chorus and a good villain; but the rest hardly rise above a very amateur level. Comic opera in this country can never have been at as low an ebb as it is now.

A far more cheerful subject than the state of comic opera is the show now running at the Prince of Wales Theatre. But let no one who goes to see *A Caribbean Rhapsody* imagine that he will spend a restful evening. KATHERINE DUNHAM and her talented company of coloured musicians and dancers from America are there for the express purpose of ensuring that he shall not. For two and a half hours they make a concerted assault upon one's eyes, ears and emotions with a torrid programme of folk-song and dance, Creole and Latin-American—and no watered-down stuff either, but the red-blooded, reeking genuine article, presented with imagination and first-rate theatre-craft. The spectator will at one moment be beguiled by the velvety

tones of Miss DUNHAM's voice as, in the rôle of a girl from Bahia flirting with a group of rope-weavers, she sings a seductive Brazilian song; but before he has fairly recovered from this, all that is primitive and savage in him will be aroused by the ritual dance of the sacrifice of the white cock to the Yoruba god Shango, a dance which fills the mysteriously greenish, half-darkened stage with a frenzied throng of quivering figures clad in voluminous and eerie white, heaving, writhing, leaping to the accompaniment of a welkin-splitting racket of drums, cymbals, shrieks and yells. Then there are Rumbas (only slightly quieter), Creole Mazurkas, Beguines, Quadrilles and flaming street scenes of tropic heat and bird-like chatter. There is too a savage folk-ballet composed by Miss DUNHAM, in the course of which we see the Majumba love-dance, an astonishing and beautiful expression of awakening passion, and l'Ag'ya, the fighting dance of Martinique, quite terrifying to witness. It is all strange, vivid and tremendously exciting. By way of relief there is a charming ragtime interlude, and a satire on the dresses we wore and the dances we danced in 1927. And if you add to all this a riot of colour as of flocks of tropical birds and butterflies you may get some notion of this wonderful show. The centre of it all is KATHERINE DUNHAM herself—anthropologist, singer, choreographer and superb dancer, languorous as a tropic night, dazzling as a bird of paradise, with more brains and artistry in one eyelash than a regiment of crooners and musical-comedy "lovelies."

D. C. B.



"Now, have you all got pencil and paper ready?"



"Poob—wait till you see Battersea Park."

Our Booking Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

"If Snow Would But Stay Put . . ."

FIRST the 'twenties, now the 'thirties, slide away and become a literary period—a period of schoolmasters turned poets, and poets inexorably, cleverly and drily turned schoolmasters. The "period" of Auden, Day Lewis, Spender and MacNeice—"their poetry emphasized the community," wrote Spender, "and overwhelmed as it was by a sense of a community disease, it searched for a communal cure in psychology and leftist politics." These poets, without losing their great technical brilliance, are now trying to do quite new things, and most of them are looking less at the community, more at themselves and at each separate frightened human being. LOUIS MACNEICE, for instance, in his "The Kingdom," wrote of the "Kingdom of individuals" who could not be subdued by mass propaganda. In his new volume, *Holes in the Sky* (FABER, 7/6), the war, the "Vigil on the Unholy Mount," is over, and he is searching for whatever it is that gives meaning to human life. Can it be found in his birthplace in Western Ireland, with its "fog-horn, mill-horn, cornerake and church-bell," its "hanging scent of sweetest hay" and desolate sea coast? Or in the comforting well-remembered figure of his father, "Someone who now has left such strands for good, Carrying his boots and paddling like a child, A square black figure whom the horizon understood"? Or in your own child who "bowls your own life in his hoop," or in the moment of passing happiness if only it can be seized—"if snow would but stay put, stay put." Except in "The Streets of Laredo" (one of his earlier fire-raid poems), MACNEICE seems to have lost his old reckless casual attitude and with it the dreary diction of the 'thirties, which pops up only occasionally in a line like "That the world will never be quite—what a cliché—the same again." Many of his new poems are extremely beautiful, and the intense emotion in them everybody must respect.

F. M. F.

Caroline Norton

The granddaughter of Sheridan and his exquisitely beautiful first wife, Elizabeth Linley, *Caroline Norton* (CONSTABLE, 16/-) inherited much of her grandfather's wit, brilliance and instability and of her grandmother's beauty, though without Elizabeth Linley's grace, if Sydney Smith is to be trusted when he called Caroline a "superb lump of flesh." Her life, simply and delightfully narrated by Miss ALICE ACLAND, was spoilt from her twentieth year onwards by her marriage with George Norton, who might have been happy with someone as stupid as himself, but whose vindictiveness was aroused by his constant sense of inferiority to his brilliant wife. He was particularly galled by her friendship with Lord Melbourne, and eventually brought a suit against Melbourne for the alienation of his wife's affections. He lost his suit, which is said to have inspired the trial scene in *Pickwick*, but, as the law then stood, he was able, after Caroline had agreed to a legal separation, to take their children into his own custody. Her struggles to obtain access to them occupied some years and, owing to the publicity in which her doings were always involved, helped in the passing of the Infants' Custody Bill. The second great friendship of her life, with Sidney Herbert, exposed her to the untrue accusation of having divulged a Cabinet secret to *The Times*, a slander elaborated by Meredith in "Diana of the Crossways," a novel based on what he had been able to learn of her character and the chief events of her unhappy life from her friends, the Duff Gordons.

H. K.

Indian Retrospect

If, as Hood's Cockney matron maintained, "a child don't feel like a child till you miss him," the same may be said of parents; and England, "not always an exemplary parent but . . . a good one," is already under reassessment. This process, as well as the prouder ends of patriotism, should be well served by *The British Achievement in India* (HODGE, 15/-), in which Mr. H. G. RAWLINSON relates, with capable historianship, selective tact and an honestly-tempered enthusiasm, the story of English intervention from the arrival of a stray Jesuit in 1579 to the striking of our flag in 1947. Exploits range from what Napier called "a very advantageous, useful, humane piece of rascality," like the conquest of Sind, to the sublimest heights of self-sacrifice; and one notes that our zeal to share cultural and constitutional privileges and further the emancipation of India—an aim put forward very early by East India Company officials—became, with the rankling disability of social exclusiveness, a two-edged weapon for all concerned. The author sees the great cities as our proudest memorial. Yet our most magnanimous representatives, from Warren Hastings on, stood by native tradition and the land. "The peasant," said Curzon, "has been the background of every policy for which I have been responsible, of every surplus of which I have had the disposition."

H. P. E.

Russian Literature

Napoleon, on being informed that literature was at a low ebb in France, instructed the Minister of the Interior to arrange for the production of some masterpieces. Doubtless the Minister of the Interior did his best, but without avail. Art and totalitarianism do not thrive together, and Mr. JANKO LAVRIN's suggestion in *From Pushkin to Mayakovsky* (SYLVAN PRESS, 12/6) that "in Soviet Russia, literature, whatever its ups and downs, is a more vital factor of life than it ever was in the past," is supported by

nothing but his bare affirmation. His book contains studies of fifteen Russian writers, from Pushkin, who was born in 1799, to Vladimir Mayakovsky, who committed suicide in 1930. In his estimates of the great writers of the nineteenth century Mr. LAVRIN is not unduly biased by his political feelings. There are, it is true, frequent hints of them, as when he credits Pushkin, "the climax of the gentry culture in Russia," with a "decidedly democratic, humanistic-democratic, and, in his early period, even revolutionary trend." But on the whole he considers Pushkin and Lermontov, Turgenev, Tolstoy and Dostoievsky on their merits as writers. With Gorky he begins to wobble, and Mayakovsky overturns him completely. Mayakovsky, he says, after quoting a great deal of his extremely bad verse, made a brave attempt to revolutionize the very rôle of poetry, and killed himself out of personal chagrin, not political, such outbursts as "I'm utterly fed up with propaganda" not implying any abatement in his zeal for the Revolution.

H. K.

Walking Out with Angeline

The foreword of *Seventeenth Summer* (HOLLIS AND CARTER, 9/6) speaks of "an artlessly artful little book"; and the publishers tell us that it has "swept America from coast to coast." We over here have possibly been spoilt by approaching American home life through the classics of a more distinguished age. You have only to compare Miss Alcott's Meg, Jo, Beth and Amy with Miss MAUREEN DALY's Lorraine, Margaret, Angeline and Kitty—and Angie's "date" Jack with Jo's Laurie—to realize the cheapening of youthful relationships that has taken place since "Little Women" took its possibly less tornado-like course across the Western Hemisphere. Miss DALY's heroine paints herself with a slightly saccharine diffidence as embarking on the complicated ritual of becoming a "date," which is a possible prelude to "going steady," which is a possible prelude to marriage. The moves of the game, watched somewhat casually by the parents and with hawk-eyed concentration by the other "teen-agers" of a small Middle West town, are handled precisely as you would expect to find them handled in the larger and glossier American weeklies. But not even the advertisement pages of those sumptuous periodicals give you a better idea of democratic values than the baker-boy hero's first overwhelming dinner at the house of his "date's" father, a travelling salesman.

H. P. E.

Papa Pontivy Goes East.

Fiction and political observation go rather awkwardly together. Mr. BERNARD NEWMAN's custom of writing his thrillers in the first person begins to grow confusing when the background is present-day Russia and Germany, because the statements of opinion on the condition of these countries may be either a serious verdict by the real NEWMAN or merely the views of the Newman engaged in what presumably are imaginary adventures, though these end still more confusingly with a meeting with the actual publisher in the ruins of Berlin. At the same time *Moscow Murder* (GOLLANCZ, 8/6) puts some unconventional material to effective use. Starting with the liquidation of a British politician, it unearths a Nazi underground movement which leads Newman and Pontivy dressed as down-and-outs to a Soviet forced-labour camp, out of it in the uniforms of the N.K.V.D., and on as German officers to a secret H.Q. in Russia where a German army is being trained with Russian help, and the last survivor of Hitler's doubles nursed by Martin Bormann for a return match. The

fictional Newman's discussions with Russians prepared to talk are interesting and apparently well-informed, and the book makes a convincing plea that in the present sickness of Germany lies a new menace to Europe. One wonders by what linguistic miracle Pontivy succeeds in passing as an American, and by what oversight he is not observed slipping round to British H.Q.; but much can be forgiven such an engaging old gentleman, the workings of whose uneasy instinct continue to be punctuated by "Damfound!"

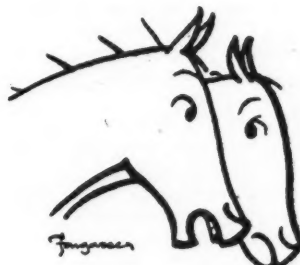
E. O. D. K.

Tales They Tell.

In his foreword to Miss DORA YATES' *A Book of Gipsy Folk-Tales* (PHENIX HOUSE, 12/6) Mr. Rupert Croft-Cooke refers to the Gipsy Lore Society, of which the author is honorary secretary, as "a scholarly and idealistic body," deplores the sentimentalists equally with those who "cash in" on the gipsy and "play him up as a spectacle or phenomenon," but admits that there is "something romantic about an Asiatic people following their nomadic way of life over the English countryside for the last five hundred years." The first section of the book contains stories recorded from Polish, Russian, Latvian, Bulgarian, Serbo-Bosnian, Hungarian, Rumanian, Piedmontese, German and Belgian narrators. The second part is filled with recorded tales told in the vernacular by gipsies. There is no doubt that Miss YATES has done great service to students of folklore, and her stories will enchant readers with enough of the detective spirit to enjoy tracing similarities between the characters of old fairy stories and the beings in these still living tales. Few of the stories have any real charm of their own, and many are streaked with coarseness and brutality. Humour of the Brer Rabbit sort is manifest in many, and occasionally there is a glint of true enchantment and absurdity, as in the tale from the Anglo-Welsh of "Jack and His Golden Snuff-box," with its matter-of-fact statements—"There was one of the little mice on sentry at the front gate going up to the palace and did try to stop Jack from going in." There are some excellent photographs of gipsy story-tellers, and the frontispiece is a portrait of "Athalie," by Mr. Augustus John, O.M.

B. E. B.

British Military Administration in Africa, 1941-47 (H.M. STATIONERY OFFICE, 17/6), by Lord RENNELL OF RODD, K.B.E., C.B., deals in the main with the progressive rehabilitation of East and North African territories after their recapture from the enemy. This full, carefully documented account will be of great value to anyone concerned, directly or indirectly, with the problems of military government and colonial administration.



"And there's another thing—all these French horses practise on Sundays."

Behind New Zealand's Corrugated Iron Curtain

(From our Correspondent West of Panama)

THE Dominion of New Zealand is a long series of lessons in geography. On a world map it looks tiny—about the size of the Isle of Wight. Actually from Auckland to Invercargill is over one thousand miles and if you travel by train and boat it seems a great deal farther. The countryside is a spectacular mixture of Argyllshire, the Engadine, Roxburghshire, Sussex, Norway and Norfolk. The cities are composed almost entirely of suburban bungalows with corrugated-iron roofs. After Japan it is virtually a desert island—especially if you are travelling by road and trying to find someone to tell you the way.

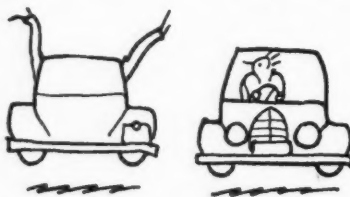
The people are most generous and tremendously British. Everyone is anxious to help us, but no one quite seems to know how. They ration themselves, save up coupons, have meatless days and spend fortunes in sending food parcels. Anyone arriving from England can get a certificate stating that he is undernourished. This enables the holder



to buy cream—which is no longer available to the general public. He can then go on buying cream until his suits begin to go at the seams.

The Government runs practically everything, including railways, buses, air services, broadcasting and fish. The country runs on a forty-hour week—for everyone except the housewives. There is no nonsense about continental week-ends. Everything closes down from Friday to Monday. In many places in the country it is practically impossible to find a living soul. There is not a single garage open. Even if you have the coupons you can't get any petrol, you can't buy any oil and it's hard even to buy food.

As a result motorists who brave the week-end roads look even more worried than the ones at home—being nearly always in a danger of running short of practically everything. Some people of course do work at week-ends. The essential services carry on; so do the clergy, the broadcasting people, the farmers and the housewives. But that is about all. And even they feel a little



self-conscious. To the business man used to struggling for life at home, New Zealand industry has a dream-like quality. Office workers pack up the office tea-set about Thursday or Friday and begin to check the supplies of milk and sugar by Monday or Tuesday.

In the countryside you can motor for days over corrugated roads without seeing a soul. Occasionally you may come across an odd house marked with a sign: "Populous Area"—but you never seem to see the owner. Corners rarely appear to be "Dangerous." "Deceptive" is the word. Grades are deceptive and curves are deceptive. Motorists on the country roads give a friendly wave in passing—a pleasant gesture but disconcerting. The first time it happened to me I thought that something terrible was happening to my car. After that I liked it very much.

There are no servants at all. The forty-hour week has produced a nation of housemaids. Cabinet Ministers pride themselves on their speed in washing up. Industrialists divide their time between high policy and housework. Social Security is a great National enterprise. Parents get 10s. a week for every child under sixteen. When Lord Beveridge visited Dunedin a local man with eleven children said he hoped to shake hands with the great man who invented what he gravely described as Sexual Security.

Every town seems to have a magnificent harbour. All the farms appear

to have well-bred cows—generally Jerseys or Friesians. But so far no cow has agreed to adopt a forty-hour week or even join a Union. This attitude is deprecated and research continues. In the green valleys thousands of sheep look white and clean and biblical. In terms of either art or saddles of mutton they make a wonderful picture.

New Zealand horses are like bicycles. You don't even have to lean them against a wall when you get off—they stand still. There are no snakes but Scotch whisky is getting scarce. I heard of one club which sent out a letter to its members saying that owing to the world crisis supplies would have to be rationed. For the time being the committee deeply regretted that whisky would have to be restricted to one bottle per member per day. But there is no shortage of calories. I actually saw a large man—a good doer—having a couple of flounders, a chop, and three eggs for breakfast.



Gold mining is on the wane. The costs are getting too high even for gold. So here and there little villages with shady but affluent pasts are closing down. Only the biggest dredgers are carrying on. These look like floating churches made of corrugated iron and in action produce a stream of diabolical shrieks and howls.

In the towns you can keep under cover as you walk from shop to shop. The pavements are roofed over with verandahs. Most convenient and sensible.

Everyone thought the world of Mr. Churchill's speeches. There is a feeling that they could do with a few more.

New Zealanders are quiet, modest and kind. They are deeply interested in sheep, fish and the speed of horses. They appear to have little time for politics and seem happy to leave the government of the country in the hands of any ardent reformer who turns up from anywhere. New Zealand is a lovely country and greatly blessed. It has everything except people. In a way it's a test case for all of us.



La Grand'mère de M. Tarragon

LONG after dinner we were sitting on the terrace of the inn, watching the setting sun drive long shadows from the poplars on the other side of the Seine farther and farther across the fields. The creaking of distant farm-carts carried clearly over the water. When he had eaten his own meal M. Tarragon came out, still in his white chef's coat.

"It's impossible to believe the Germans were ever here," I exclaimed.

"It isn't so difficult for me," the old man said gently. "You remember the summer restaurant we had? They knocked it down to make room for a light railway for the V.I.s. My job in the *Résistance* was to let the British know about the launching sites."

"How?" I asked. "Wireless?"

"Give me a chance, *mon ami*! I can make a *sauce joinville*, but do I look like a telegraph-girl? Up behind the hill there the R.A.F. dropped pigeons. At night the farmers' wives used to come and whisper 'The one in our meadow's almost ready!' and then off would go a pigeon and three or four days after the big bombers came and—*boumf!*"

"Pigeons? But what about the Gestapo?"

"The Germans," said M. Tarragon judiciously, blowing a great cloud from his pipe, "think themselves the cleverest people in the world, and therefore they're the most stupid. So long as you had the courage to stick to the obvious you were safe. I kept the pigeons, each in his little box, in the big dovecote in the yard. To a German it was inconceivable that it might be put to its proper use."

"It must have been touchy work, all the same," I said.

"From time to time it developed some small drama of its own. The visit of von Strelitz one remembers. Most of the high-ups who stayed here were barbarians, but Strelitz in other times I should have welcomed. He had a real love of the French poets, and for a German a knowledge of our wines that was extraordinary. Needless to say he wasn't a Nazi. He came from Paris to inspect the latest sites. We knew where they were, of course, but we were a bit short on the technical details. So it was decided to drop an expert from the Free French, a wiry little Norman named Victor. He landed over the river there, and swam across. Earlier the same evening the General had arrived, without warning. It was no time to have an agent loose in the village. So Victor put on a white night-dress and a frilled cap and went to bed

in the top room, while I discovered I had a grandmother."

Upstream the ferry came suddenly to life, and began to clank its way across.

"On the second evening the General gave a banquet. He came to me himself to discuss the menu, very simply and amiably. 'I'm not sure if there's a lady of the house?' 'None but my poor old grandmother,' I told him, 'now confined to bed by virtue of being ninety-four.' 'I shall be very happy if she will accept these with my compliments,' said the General, and handed me a magnificent bunch of roses. Not a bad start for Victor!"

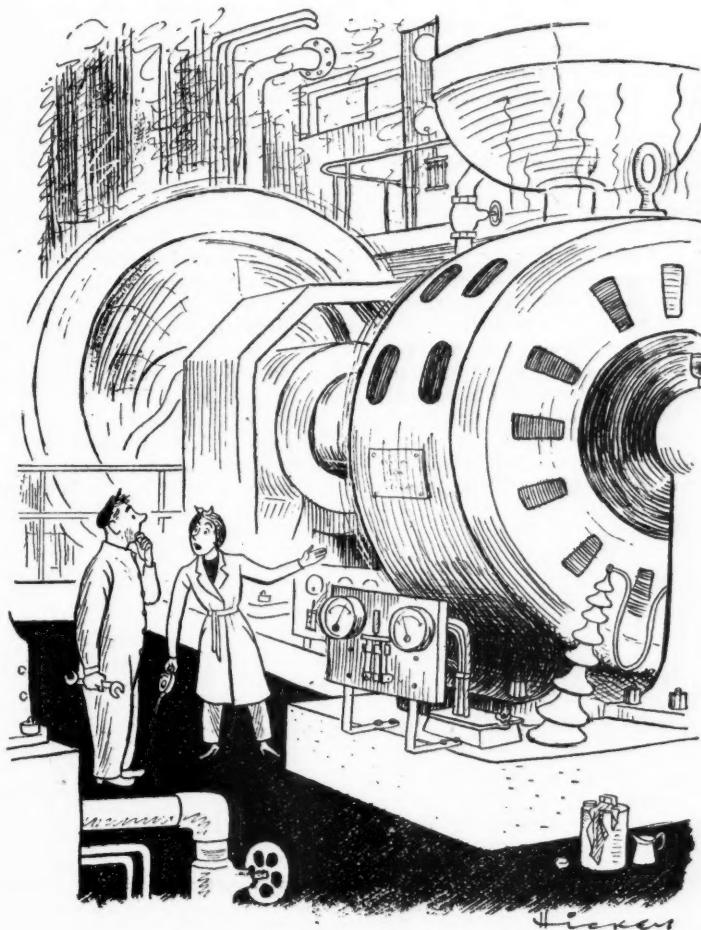
"Was the General trying to catch you out?" I asked.

"Not for a moment. For a German

he was a gentleman. Well, just as I was putting the finishing touches to a *pâté de canard* that afternoon news reached me the Gestapo were beginning a house-to-house search. I had to think quickly, for the grandmother stuff was only proof against routine inquiries. I said to myself: 'These pigs do not look for pigeons in the pigeon-loft, so where will they least expect to find a spy?' And that was how Victor became the General's waiter, with a limp for sympathy and a stutter."

"But your grandmother?"

"Madame Mathieu, a staunch patriot of eighty, was called to the colours. She was put in a barrel with a false bottom and wheeled here on a hand-cart by a small boy, and we whipped



"Every now and then it makes a noise exactly like a shoulder-strap breaking."

her up the back-stairs and into bed a minute before the Gestapo arrived. Very old ladies do not differ greatly. She passed with honours."

"What sort of dinner did you give the General?" we asked.

"As an artist I was in a quandary. I respected him as a man and a gourmet, yet as a Frenchman I was sensible of my duty. When it came to the *ragoût de lièvre* Victor gave the General a special portion, while I poured a good deal of shot into the rest, on which I am happy to say the S.S. major broke several teeth. 'Ça va?' I'd whisper to Victor when he came limping into the kitchen, and 'Ça va,' he'd whisper back. Naturally he kept the bottles on the move, and

all the time he was picking up a lot he hadn't known about V.l.s."

"And you got away with it?"

"Just as the cheese was being served," said M. Tarragon, "a Brie of too much nobility for the occasion, hell broke out in the dining-room. This was the end, I was sure. There was angry shouting, the noise of chairs overturned, and above it all the voice of von Strelitz giving orders. Then Victor limped in with a grin and it was all I could do not to weep. A Prussian colonel full of Chamberlain had said that Himmler was what everyone knew he was, and the S.S. major had slapped his face. It is always the same with these Germans. They sully good food with politics."

"How did it end?"

"The General put them both under arrest, and the party went on till two. Before they broke up he gave Victor a note for five hundred and signed it. Next morning Victor went as a labourer to the site at Bosquetville, and a fortnight later he was back in London being stood drinks on the strength of the autograph. Would you care to see it?"

"Very much."

"Then you must lunch in Yvetot to-morrow. Just stroll into the café by the Mairie and ask the little man with the bullet-hole in his ear if General von Strelitz can borrow five hundred francs from the grandmother of M. Tarragon."

ERIC.

Memorabilia

I CAN never understand why any man should complain about his wife's weak memory. Not only does he avoid many sermons, but he can tell her the same jokes every few weeks. Also, he can surprise her over and over again with the same little bits of knowledge. I have made few discoveries in the field of literary research. I can think off hand of only five or six, all piffing except perhaps the true meaning of *pdf*, Swift's name in the Little language. But I can spring these discoveries on my wife time and again, and impress her more each time; she remembers being impressed, you see, though not what made the impression, and she has the idea that I have told her of hundreds of little triumphs. She thinks I am a scholar.

But for some reason or other I failed to please her last night. Perhaps she

was just a little tired. She was saying "I often think about Thomas Jefferson's words in the Declaration of Independence about the *pursuit of happiness*. What an exact phrase that is! Not happiness, but its pursuit. He was a philosopher, that one."

"And so you should often think about those words," I said, "for I am always telling you that Jefferson did not coin the phrase at all. Johnson did, in *Rasselas*, some few years before the Declaration was written."

"Nonsense," she said. "Everyone knows Jefferson invented the phrase."

"I've proved he didn't," I said. "I've proved it to you. We've been through all this before."

"I don't remember a thing about it," she said. "And I happen to have rather a photographic memory. But I won't argue. I don't believe in making

an issue of anything. The thing is, let's see you prove it now."

Which of course I did. At this point she should have said "Well, isn't that astounding? What bright eyes you've got," or something to that effect. Instead, she said "Well, that doesn't prove Jefferson read *Rasselas*."

"It was a popular book, and Thomas was literate all right."

"It's the sort of phrase that might occur to anyone," she said. "Johnson wasn't so smart. Neither are you."

"But, good heavens," I protested, "if there's nothing unusual about the phrase, why did you begin by calling it wonderful? And it is a good phrase . . . you are quite right."

"It's a stupid phrase," she said. "But it was all right before you began fooling around with it. Why can't men leave things alone?"

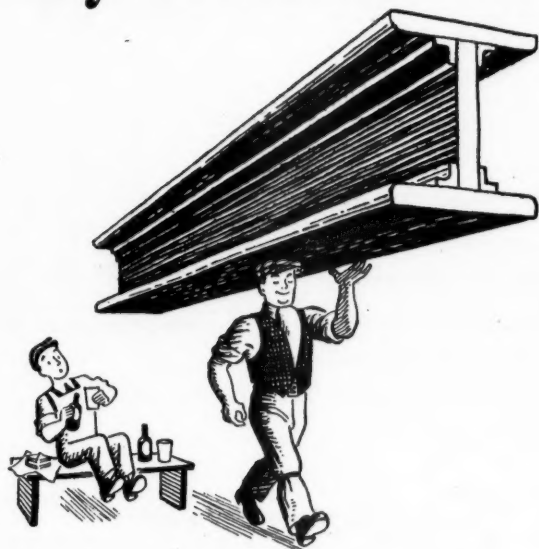


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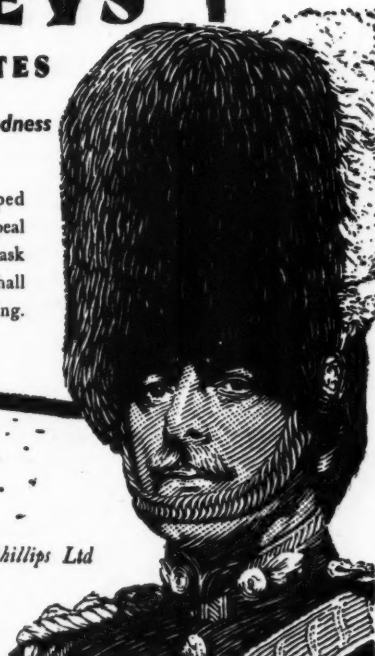
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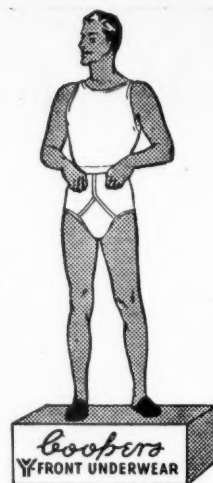
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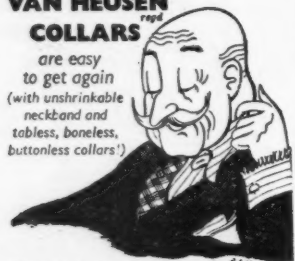
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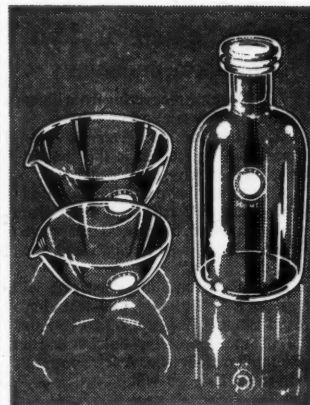
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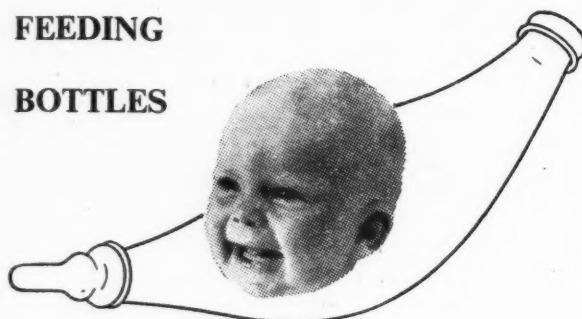
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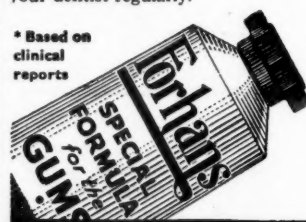


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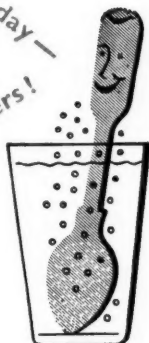


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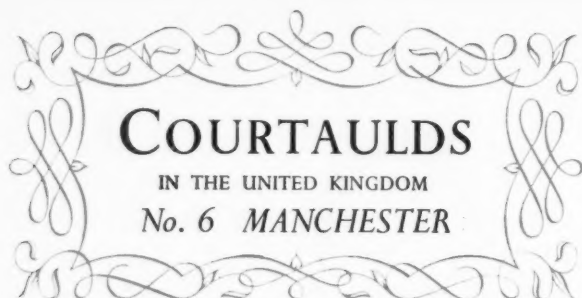
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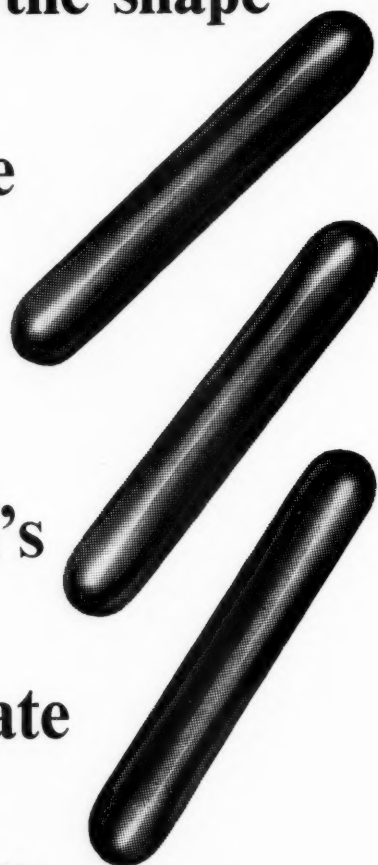
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